

HBCU/MEI Subcontracting with DOE/Prime Contractors: Identifying the Challenges, Finding the Answers

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Oak Ridge National Laboratory: Challenges in Subcontracting with HBCUs/ MEIs

DOE diversity mission:

“Increase initiatives with minority educational institutions...”

“Increase small business participation in contracting...”

Challenges:

- How can the laboratory improve its interactions with HBCUs/MEIs?
- How can the Small Business Programs Office work to **increase the number of subcontracts awarded to HBCUs/MEIs?**

Oak Ridge National Laboratory: Challenges in Subcontracting with HBCUs/ MEIs

Assessment:

- Ascertain the facts based on feedback from the parties involved – not just on what the lab “thinks” should be done
- Analyze data
- Make recommendations to improve performance

Assessment: DOE/Prime Contractor Subcontracting with HBCUs/MEIs

An Examination of
Department of Energy/
Oak Ridge National Laboratory
Subcontracting Practices
with Historically Black Colleges
and Universities (HBCUs)
and
Minority Educational Institutions
(MEIs)

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Purpose:

- To help the laboratory improve results in subcontracting with HBCUs/MEIs

Objective:

- To take a factual approach in gathering data
- Ascertain opinions on subcontracting practices through targeted surveys

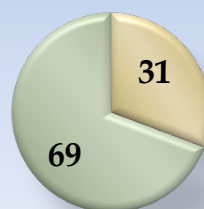
Method:

- To analyze and compare the input from ORNL researchers and HBCU/MEI faculty members
- Make recommendations for the solutions to disparities or the perceived deficiencies in subcontracting as described by both groups

Assessment: Response

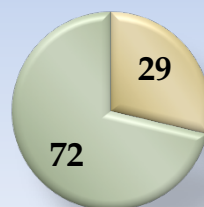
HBCU/MEI Responses - 30%

■ HBCUs/MEIs ■ Non-Respondants

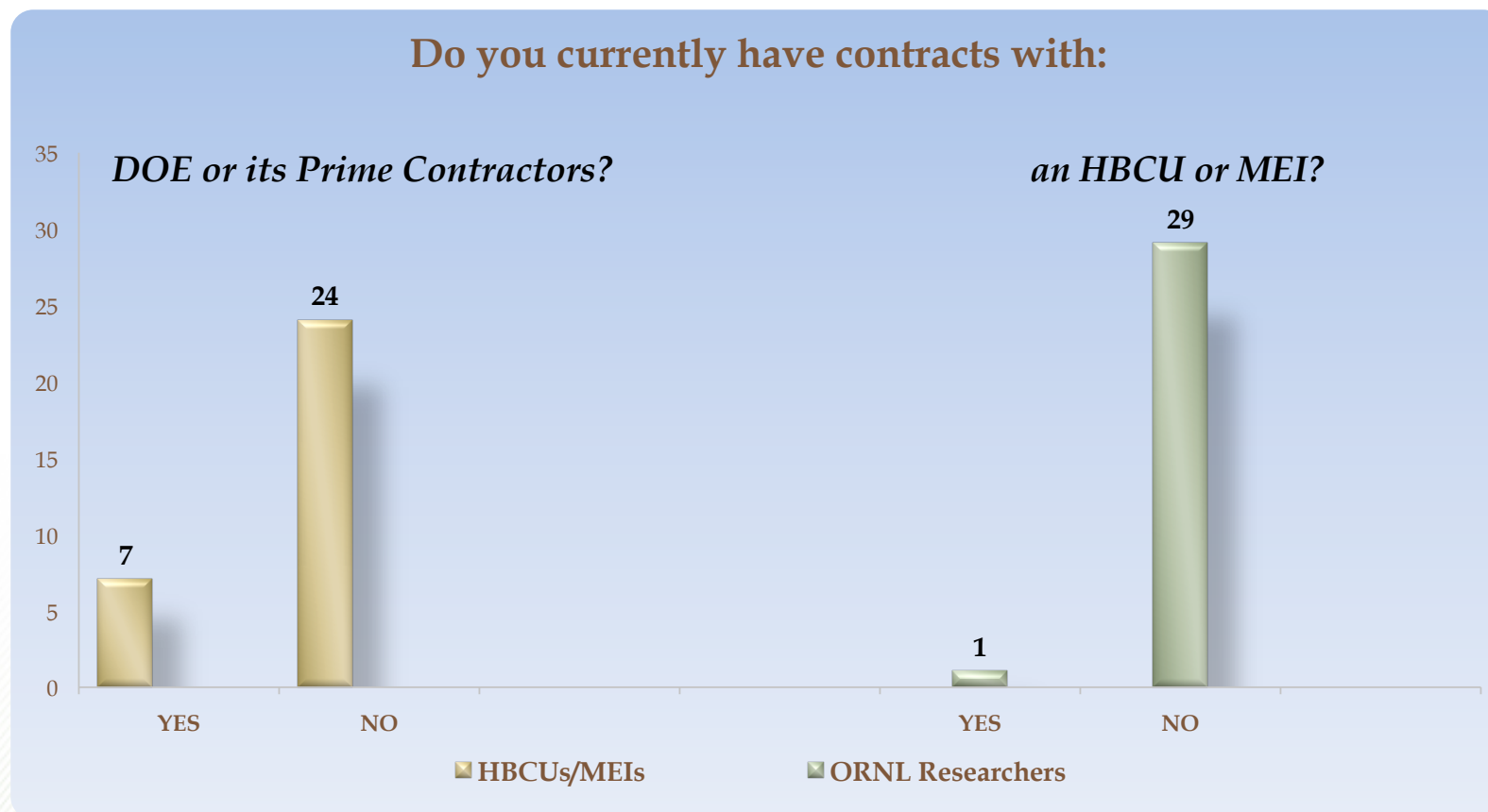


Researcher Responses - 30%

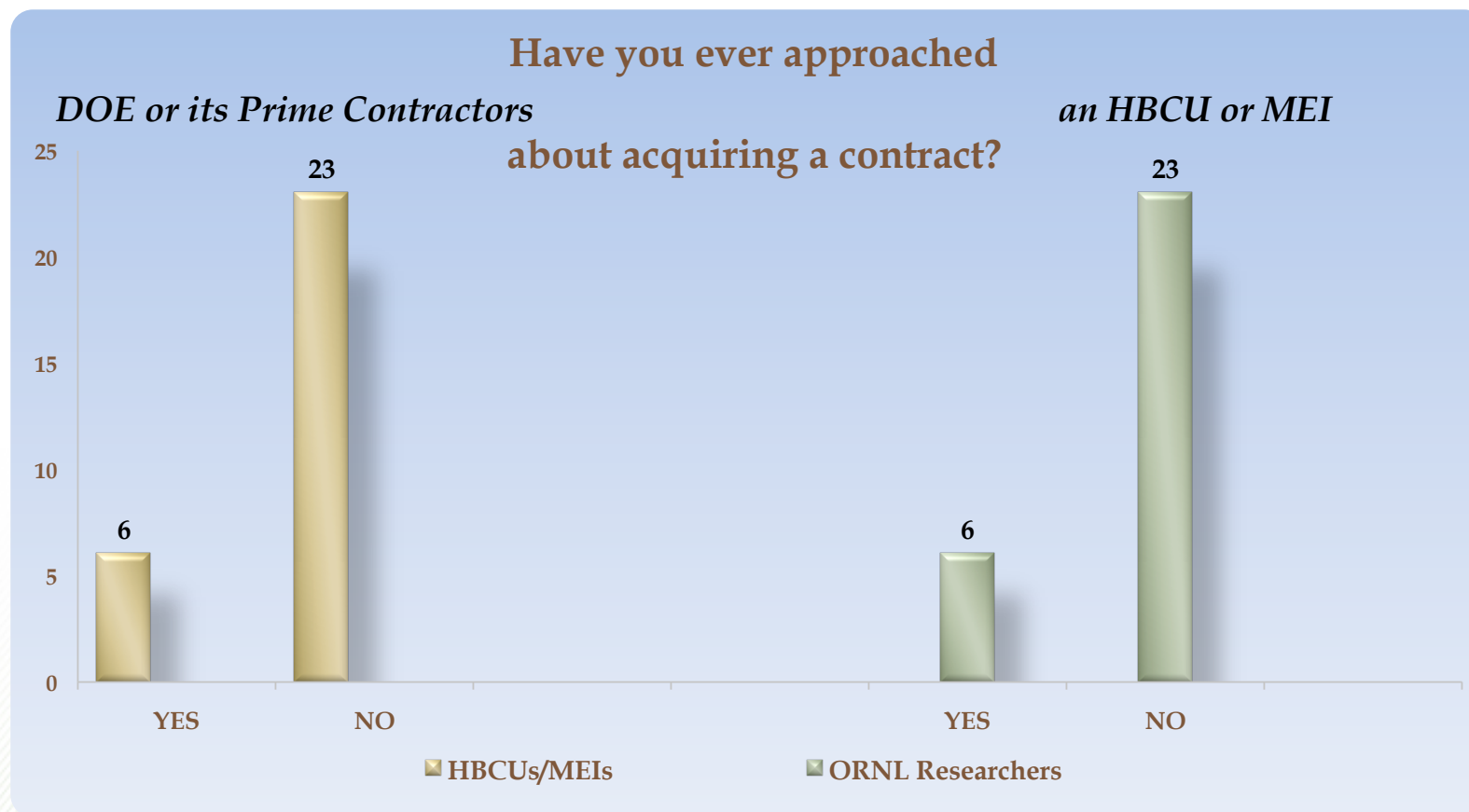
■ ORNL Researchers ■ Non-Respondants



Current Subcontracting

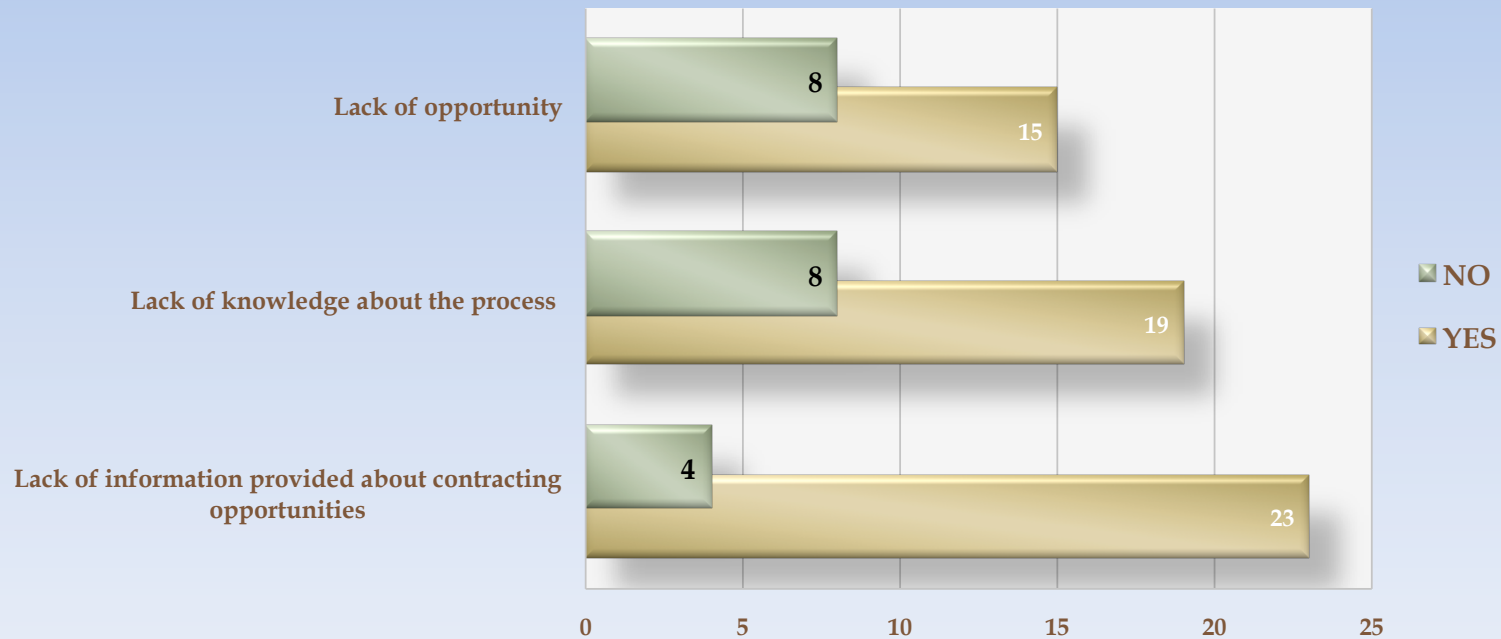


Current Subcontracting



Barriers to Subcontracting

Describe what you (HBCUs/MEIs) believe are the barriers to obtaining contracts with DOE/Prime Contractors.



Barriers to Subcontracting: HBCUs/MEIs

Comments from HBCU/MEI faculty:

- Lack of (university) internal infrastructure to support contract administration; insufficient time for faculty to follow through on contracting opportunities
- There is plenty of opportunity. There is lack of understanding about how corporations and universities operate and the difference between the legal obligations for grants vs. contracts



Barriers to Subcontracting: HBCUs/MEIs

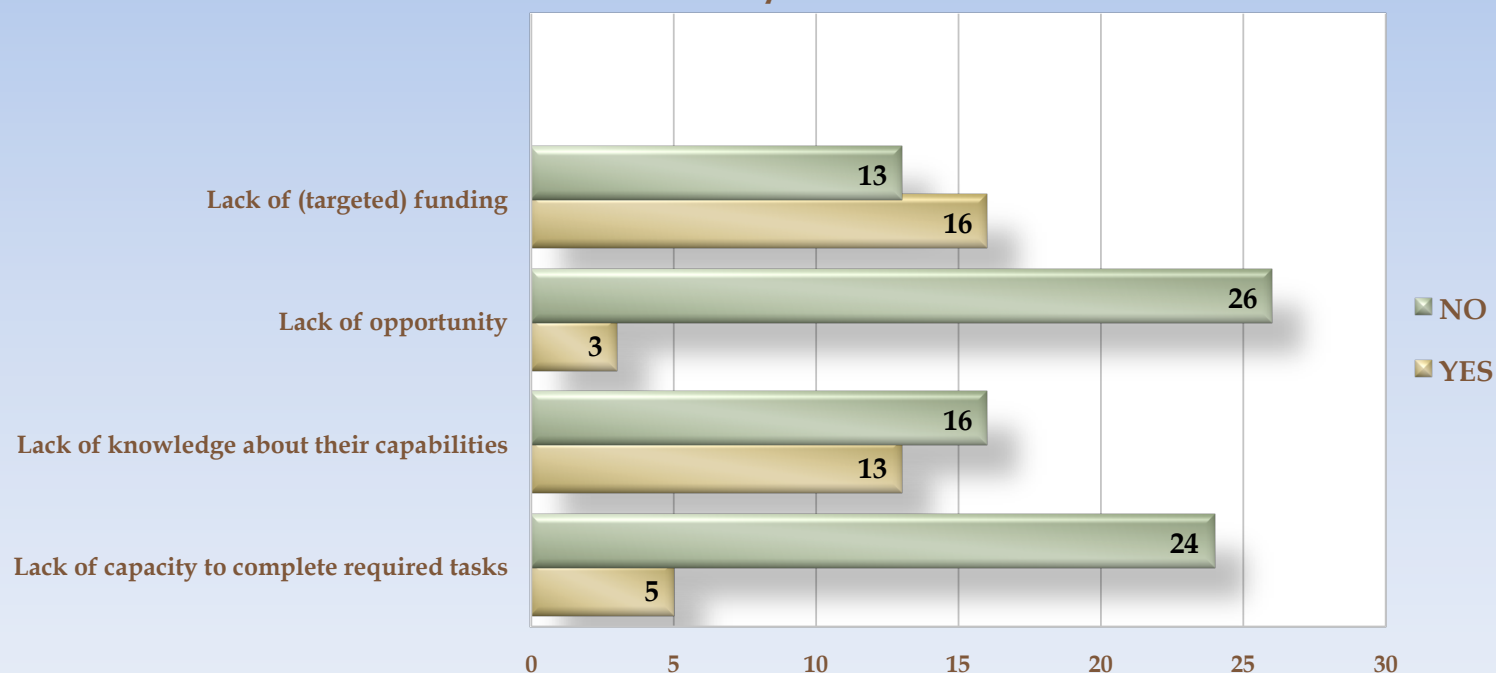
Comments from HBCU/MEI faculty:

- There is a tendency for DOE to seek out an award contracts to previous DOE awardees based on past performance records
- Opportunities could always be better advertised



Barriers to Subcontracting

Describe what you (RESEARCHERS) believe are the barriers to working with HBCUs/MEIs



Barriers to Subcontracting: Researchers

Comments from ORNL researchers:

- There needs to be funding (at ORNL) to seed projects that specifically facilitate interactions
- (Lack of) Understanding that the work is for a product or service and not a grant for educational advancement
- Lack of contacts in “cyber” - high performance computing (and/or other highly interdisciplinary areas of study) at HBCUs/MEIs



How do you improve the process?

HBCUs/MEIs

- Both sides should develop better relationships with each other; know the other's capabilities
- “Interaction with DOE is fine” – DOE should develop a list of universities/colleges that they want Prime Contractors to use
- Provide more information about subcontracting opportunities

How do you improve the process?

ORNL Researchers

- More awareness of the roles these institutions can play
- Schools should better publicize their capabilities
- Emphasize partnerships, collaborations and teaming that are science and technology-related for research and development

Recommendations for HBCUs/ MEIs

1. **Identify one or two of the institution's top area(s) of expertise** in science research.
3. **Develop a short capabilities statement, preferably 1-2 pages, that identifies and promotes the institution's area (s) of expertise.**
5. **Investigate and research DOE and its Prime Contractors** to find out where the identified expertise can be utilized.
7. **Market DOE and its Prime Contractors, as appropriate, in those area(s) of expertise.**

Recommendations for HBCUs/ MEIs

5. **Assign staff to be responsible for marketing,** networking and relationship-building with DOE and appropriate Prime Contractors.
7. **Obtain expertise in proposal writing.** Consider using the institution's School of Business as a resource.
9. **Consider teaming with a small business** that is within the university's area of expertise to compete for opportunities.

Recommendations for ORNL

1. **Identify and target schools with academic programs, i.e., science research, that would lend to a successful working relationship with the laboratory**
2. **Enhance the Mentor-Protégé Program for HBCUs/MEIs.**
5. **Identify best practices for working with HBCUs/MEIs from researchers who are doing/or have done so.**
6. **Discuss with DOE and ORNL management possible funding sources for collaborations, while still giving schools the opportunity to offer competitive bids on subcontracts.**
7. **Develop and deploy a training session that explains ORNL solicitations, the bidding process and subcontracting and offer to selected HBCUs/MEIs.**

Recommendations for DOE

1. **Similar to the DoD, DOE should establish an HBCU/MEI subcontracting goal to be part of the small business socioeconomic goals, (i.e. SDB, WOB, HUBZone and SDVOB.)**
3. **DOE-ORO should include HBCU/MEI subcontracting performance as an objective/goal in the Performance Evaluation and Measurement Plan (award fee), to help ensure senior management focus and attention on this activity.**

Recommendations for DOE

3. To ensure more opportunities for HBCUs/MEIs nationwide, increased emphasis should be placed on including HBCUs/MEIs in the Prime Contractor's Mentor-Protégé Programs.
5. DOE should provide incentives for prime contractors to subcontract with HBCUs/MEIs, such as making HBCUs/MEIs a category for subcontracting set-asides, similar to HUBZone or SDVOBs.
7. Other incentives for subcontracting should also be considered, such as public recognition, Secretarial awards, etc.

Oak Ridge National Laboratory

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www.ornl.gov/smallbusiness

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